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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement by Pentagon Press Secretary Peter Cook on Coalition Strike Against ISIL External Attack Operatives

Press Operations

Release No: NR-441-16
Dec. 13, 2016
PRINT | E-MAIL

A coalition precision airstrike conducted on Dec. 4 in Raqqa, Syria, resulted in the deaths of three ISIL leaders directly involved in facilitating external terror operations and recruiting foreign fighters. Two of those targeted - Salah Gourmat, and Sammy Djedou - were involved in facilitating the Nov. 13, 2015, terrorist attacks in Paris. Both were close associates of Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, the ISIL external operations leader who died in an August coalition airstrike. The third ISIL leader killed in this strike, Walid Hamman, was a

suicide attack planner who was convicted in absentia in Belgium for a terror plot disrupted in 2015. All three were part of a network led by Boubaker Al-Hakim, who was killed in another coalition airstrike on Nov. 26. The three were working together to plot and facilitate attacks against Western targets at the time of the strike.

As the coalition and our local partners continue to take territory from ISIL on the ground in both Iraq and Syria, this strike highlights our relentless efforts to simultaneously target ISIL members who seek to attack the United States, our interests, and our allies around the world. Since mid-November, the coalition has now successfully targeted five top ISIL external plotters, further disrupting ISIL's ability to carry out terrorist operations beyond Syria and Iraq. Our recent efforts have been aided by the rapid exploitation of intelligence material collected in territory formerly held by ISIL and by close coordination within the international coalition and with our local partners. Those who seek to attack the United States, our coalition partners and allies around the world will find no safe haven.

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